



WESTERN RECORDER

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Atheists come up short in battle of British bus ads

London (RNS)—A group of atheists warring with Christians over advertising space on London's traditional red buses have lost their fight—although more through a lack of financial pledges rather than from divine intervention.

A monthlong campaign led by British political activist and self-proclaimed atheist Jon Worth was triggered by fury over religious advertisements posted on the buses by a Christian-oriented group known as Proclaiming Truth in London.

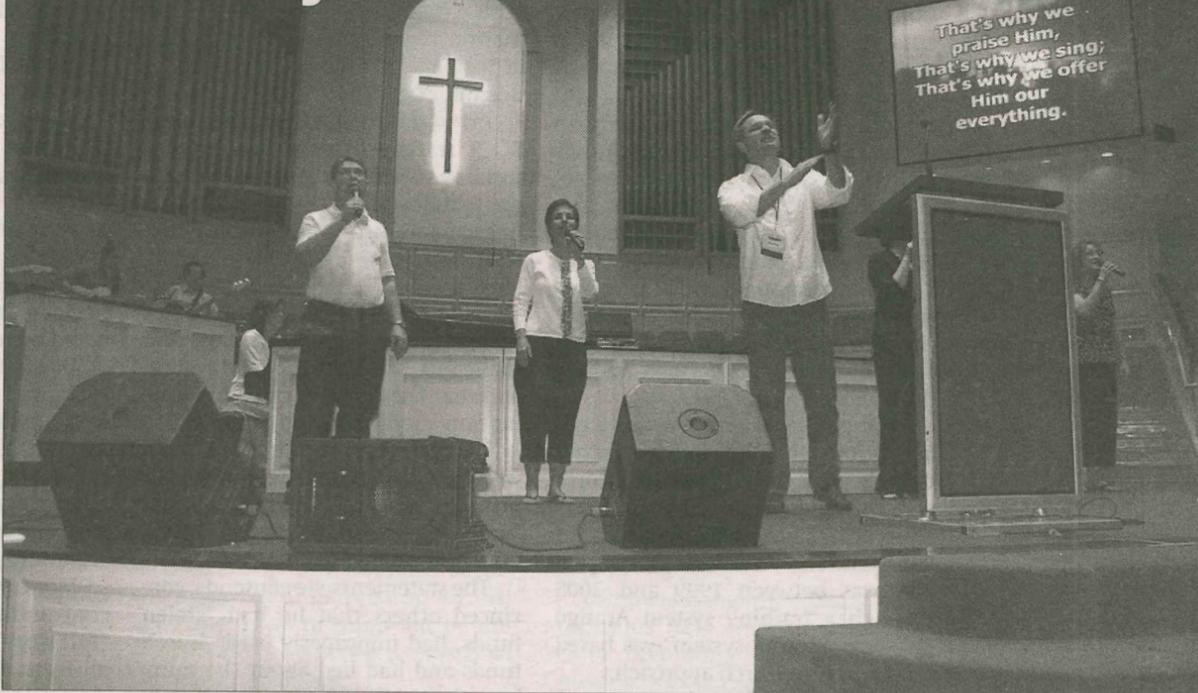
Particularly irksome to the atheists was one of the Christians' ads that read: "When the son of man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"

Worth's campaigners already had their own slogan ready for plastering on the buses—"There's probably no God. Now stop worrying and get on with your life"—but they needed to raise nearly \$50,000 to buy a two-week slot on just one vehicle.

They figured on raising the sum online through \$10 pledges from sympathetic atheists, but to little avail, as it turned out. With the campaign now over, the nonbelievers have amassed less than \$9,000, and their signs were down before they were ever put up.

According to London's Daily Telegraph newspaper, "It is not yet clear whether Mr. Worth plans to use the money pledged ... to fund a smaller, cheaper advert."

Saturday celebration



Steve Gray and the Immanuel Baptist Church music team lead a time of worship during the opening session of last week's Super Saturday conference in Lexington. (Photo by Dannah Prather)

Super Saturday conference aims to boost church health, growth

By Drew Nichter
News Director

Lexington—Focused on "moving ministries forward," the Kentucky Baptist Convention kicked off its annual Super Saturday training conferences Aug. 16 at Immanuel Baptist Church in Lexington, the first of six one-day events across the state.

More than 925 participants gathered seeking practical tips from more than 100 workshops to help expand and enhance church ministries of all areas, including discipleship, evangelism, women's ministry and small groups.

The Lexington Super Saturday conference featured two new tracks

on which the KBC has placed special emphasis this year: Comeback Churches and the Safe Church Initiative tracks.

The Comeback Churches track is offered as part of the Comeback Churches process which the KBC began in March for stagnant or declining churches looking to experience regrowth. It is based on the popular book by Ed Stetzer and Mike Dodson, which traced the common characteristics of churches that experienced growth after years of decline.

Meanwhile, the Safe Church Initiative track is designed to provide church leaders with tips on how to keep church members and staff safe

in order to maintain the integrity of the ministry. Super Saturday courses in this area primarily focused on children's and youth ministry (see related story on page 3).

Acknowledging the need for practical training and new ideas in all areas of ministry, event coordinator Darryl Wilson, KBC's adult Sunday school department director, noted that the early response to the Super Saturday workshops was positive. He added that highlighting the Comeback Churches track was important so that church leaders could discover and discuss ways to turn their congregations around.

□ See Stetzer urges return ... *Page 3*

Gunman enters Arkansas Baptist building after killing politician

By Charlie Warren
Arkansas Baptist News

Little Rock, Ark. (ABP)—A man fitting the description of a suspect who shot and killed the chairman of the Arkansas Democratic Party Aug. 13 menaced employees at the nearby Arkansas Baptist State Convention headquarters shortly thereafter.

"A middle-aged white man in a white shirt entered our building at 525 West Capitol (Avenue) with a gun," according to Dan Jordan, the convention's business manager. "The operator recognized immediately there was a threat. We have a process in place where she called the building manager immediately to respond."

The Baptist building is located six blocks east of the Democratic Party offices, also on Capitol Avenue, in downtown Little Rock, Ark.

Jordan said the man ran up the stairwell to the second floor of the Baptist building with a pistol in his

hand. When Kirby Martin, the convention's building manager, confronted him, the man cocked the gun and pointed it at Martin.

Martin asked what was wrong, and the man responded he had lost his job. Martin was able to flee the threat, and the gunman went down another stairway and out the front door of the building.

The building operator had called Little Rock police, who arrived soon after the man left the building. The gunman had jumped into a pickup truck on Arch Street, at the side entrance of the building, and sped away. Jordan said the police were in pursuit of him as soon as he drove off.

The man did not fire a shot while in the Arkansas Baptist building.

Bill Gwatney, Arkansas Democratic Party chairman, was reportedly shot three times in the torso after a man similar to the assailant's description entered the Democratic of-

fice, just moments before the Baptist building incident.

Police assailed the suspect after a high-speed chase to Sheridan, about 30 miles south of downtown Little Rock, where they disabled his truck. At some point in the incident gunfire was exchanged and the suspect was killed.

Suspect recently fired

Authorities later identified the shooter as Timothy Dale Johnson, 50. He lived in Searcy, Ark., about 50 miles northeast of Little Rock. According to several local news outlets, Johnson lived alone and had been fired from his job at a Target store earlier in the day.

Authorities who conducted a search of his home indicated it did not turn up any writings, books or magazines that would provide insight into his motive.

Gwatney, 48, was a businessman from a prominent Arkansas fami-

ly that owned a bank and, later, a group of automobile dealerships. He rose to political power as a state senator from Jacksonville, a Little Rock suburb.

Gwatney was a close friend and political ally of the Clinton family. Bill and Hillary Clinton released statements calling him a "cherished friend and confidante" and saying they were "deeply saddened" by his death.

"The details and stories will be told for days to come through the local and national media, but the greater story involves the emotional and spiritual needs of those directly affected by these events," noted Emil Turner, the Arkansas convention's executive director. "Their lives will be marked by painful memories and unresolved questions."

Turner urged prayer for the families of Gwatney and Johnson.

With additional reporting by Robert Marus of Associated Baptist Press

Dated material. Please deliver by Wednesday, August 20.

Former Texas church planter files lawsuit

Texas convention, newspaper named in defamation suit

By Vicki Brown
Associated Baptist Press

Edinburg, Texas (ABP)—A former Hispanic church planter implicated in a 2006 Baptist General Convention of Texas scandal has filed a defamation lawsuit against the BGCT and several other Texas Baptist entities and individuals.

Otto Arango, founder of the now-defunct Piper Institute of Church Planting, was one of three pastors accused in 2006 of misappropriating funds the Texas convention provided for new Hispanic church starts.

In addition to the BGCT, the lawsuit names the Baptist Standard, the BGCT's news journal, and several churches, associations and individuals.

Arango's legal action stems from allegations that he and two other church planters, Aaron de la Torre and Armando Vera, misused BGCT church-start funds. The trio claimed 258 churches had been started in Texas between 1999 and 2005 through a training system Arango had devised. The system was based on the house-church approach.

Questions about Arango's reportedly lavish lifestyle and suspicions about the use of some funds prompted BGCT officials to ask an independent counsel to investigate.

The investigative team reported that the BGCT had given more than \$1.3 million for start-up funding for the program and monthly support for Arango, de la Torre and Vera. Investigators also noted that 98 percent of the congregations they claimed to have planted via the program either no longer existed or existed only on paper.

The team noted that the Piper Institute had delayed providing information requested of it and that de la Torre admitted to falsifying some documents.

Investigators also accused some BGCT staffers of poor oversight of funding, uneven management, failure to follow the convention's guidelines and failure to investigate when staff became aware of possible problems.

In the lawsuit, Arango alleges that the defendants made "false and malicious statements" about him, and that they have harmed his "reputation, credibility and integrity."

He claims that the statements were published in the Standard's print edition and on its Web site "with malice and a lack of good faith."

The statements, he contends, convinced others that he had "stolen funds, had improperly used church funds and had lied about the number of new Hispanic Baptist churches he had started."

Arango's lawsuit primarily points to the convention and the Standard. He did not list specific charges

against the other defendants.

Arango is suing for lost earnings, including back pay and benefits, retirement benefits and lost future earning or diminished earning capacity. The lawsuit seeks unspecified damages for past and future mental and physical pain and anguish.

He also asks for unspecified punitive damages, claiming that the defendants "acted with malice, actual malice and/or a specific intent to injure" him.

In a written statement, BGCT Executive Director Randel Everett expressed surprise and disappointment that Arango had turned to litigation. But, he added, "we believe this suit is totally without merit and that the BGCT has no liability in the matter."

"The Standard denies the allegations and expects to be exonerated," noted editor Marv Knox.

David Montoya, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Mineral Wells, Texas, who also is named as a defendant in the lawsuit, said he welcomes the opportunity to face Arango in a legal setting. "I will not settle with the man, period," he declared. "I want to go to court."

Montoya argued that the legal confrontation is the only way the "full story" will become available to all Texas Baptists. "It is the only way we are going to get the complete investigative report out," he noted, calling the BGCT report released after the investigation "only the tip of the iceberg."

Emir Caner tapped as new leader of Truett-McConnell

Cleveland, Ga. (BP)—Emir Caner, founding dean of The College at Southwestern in Fort Worth,



Emir Caner

Texas, was elected as the eighth president of Truett-McConnell College in Cleveland, Ga., Aug. 8.

Caner, 37, who was raised in a Sunni Muslim family in Ohio and converted to Christianity as a teenager in 1982, will become the youngest president ever to lead Truett-McConnell, a four-year college affiliated with the Georgia Baptist Convention. He will begin his new duties Aug. 18.

Caner has led The College at Southwestern—the undergraduate program at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary—since 2005.

He has held faculty positions at Southwestern and at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C. He holds a Ph.D. degree from the University of Texas at Arlington, a master of divinity from Southeastern and a bachelor of arts in biblical studies from Criswell College in Dallas.

Terrell Williams, chairman of Truett-McConnell's trustees, said in a news release, "It's a great day in the life of Truett-McConnell College and Georgia Baptists. The TMC Board of Trustees is extremely excited about the future of our school under the leadership of Dr. Emir Caner."

Bucky Kennedy, president of the Georgia Baptist Convention, said Caner will "bring to Truett-McConnell a level of Christian education that will raise the bar academically but also manifest itself in the life of the students." J. Robert White, executive director of the Georgia convention, described Caner as "a scholar, a professor, a writer, a preacher and an experienced administrator—a powerful combination of gifts. At the same time, he has a vibrant personality and is easy to know."

Caner said his vision is to build the college of nearly 500 students into "a nationally recognized college that is based on the Word of God."

While affirming the institution's liberal arts foundation, he said Truett-McConnell's goal must be to "thoroughly equip students to engage the culture with a distinctively Christian and Baptist worldview."

He added that in time, and in line with accreditation approval, the college will be offering more Bible classes and other curriculum "that equips students to engage the culture with a dynamic witness that changes the world by changing lives."

BAPTIST DIGEST

Criswell accrediting probation lifted. The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools has removed Dallas-based Criswell College from its probation list. The accrediting agency placed Criswell on probation in June 2007 because the school had failed to demonstrate compliance with standards governing financial stability and "appropriate control" of financial resources. Criswell officials said they believe an auditing error caused what they described as an "unnecessary" probation. The news comes at a time of significant turmoil for the school. Former president, Jerry Johnson, resigned abruptly Aug. 5 shortly after Johnson and at least one Criswell trustee publicly accused First Baptist Church of Dallas, which owns the school, and its pastor, Robert Jeffress, of planning to sell the institution's assets.

ABC organizes Burmese Baptist meeting. In October, the American Baptist Churches USA will convene the first-ever national conference for Burmese Baptist leaders serving in the United States. More than 30 pastors and lay leaders are expected to attend the Oct. 21-22 event, to be held at Chin Baptist Church in Dallas. The event will help newly resettled pastors and lay leaders in local churches become familiar with American Baptist processes for attaining professional standing, ordination and theological and continuing education. Burma—also known as Myanmar—was one of the first nations that Baptist missionaries targeted in the early 19th century. It has long been home to significant numbers of Baptists and other Christians.

PNBC urges action on foreclosures. Members of the Progressive National Baptist Convention called for governmental action to halt housing foreclosures and address climate change during their recent annual meeting in Atlanta. The historically African-American denomination also urged its churches to ask members to seek congressional and presidential action to support measures that would reduce carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions. The 2.5 million-member denomination, of which the late Martin Luther King Jr. was a member, again voiced its support for the end of the Iraq war and the need to involve churches in reducing the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Longtime SWBTS prof Brister dies

Fort Worth, Texas (ABP)—C.W. Brister Jr., who taught pastoral counseling and theology to generations of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary students, died Aug. 9, reportedly of complications from Lou Gehrig's disease. He was 82.

Brister was a professor of pastoral counseling at the Fort Worth, Texas, seminary for 45 years. He held the title of distinguished professor emeritus of pastoral ministry, and the Southwestern School of Theology gives an award named for Brister annually to the most outstanding student in pastoral ministry.

Commodore Webster Brister Jr., was born in 1926 in Pineville, La. He earned his bachelor's degree from

Louisiana College in his hometown, and went on to earn his master's degree from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. He received his doctorate from Southwestern.

Before going to teach at Southwestern, he served as pastor of churches in Louisiana and Texas.

Brister's son, Mark, retired last year from the presidency of Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee, Okla.

Besides his son, daughter-in-law and two grandsons, he is survived by his wife, Gloria, and his sister, Dolores Bausum of Beloit, Wis.

Brister's funeral was held Aug. 15 at Broadway Baptist Church in Fort Worth.

Union Univ. honors Baptist editors

Jackson, Tenn. (BP)—Lonnie Wilkey, editor of the Tennessee Baptist & Reflector, and Will Hall, executive editor of Baptist Press, became the first two fellows inducted to Union University's Center for Media, Faith and Culture during Union's summer commencement ceremony Aug. 2.

Union President David Dockery honored Wilkey and Hall for their work in reporting on the Feb. 5 tornado that caused \$40 million in damage to the Union campus in Jackson, Tenn. At a time when Union was without power and without a Web site to communicate emergency information, Dockery said, "Two major people and their staffs came to our help and our aid. They went above and beyond the call of duty."

In the aftermath of the tornado, Baptist Press devoted a special page of its site to Union-related stories and helped provide up-to-the-minute information to Southern Baptist readers.

Two days after the tornado, Wilkey and other leaders from the Tennessee Baptist Convention were on the campus looking for ways to help.

Wilkey also ran several stories about Union—both in the Baptist & Reflector newspaper and on the Tennessee Baptist Convention Web site.

Dockery presented Wilkey and Hall with plaques, honoring them for their service to Union.

"We are deeply, deeply grateful," Dockery said. "They are special friends."

Being a 'Safe Church' doesn't happen by accident

By Dannah Prather
Partnerships Editor

Lexington—Nothing puts a damper on ministry like a lawsuit—or worse—an injured child.

That was the message Steve Coleman, minister to youth at First Baptist Church of Richmond, shared with Kentucky Baptists attending a session during this year's first Super Saturday leadership development event in Lexington.

The workshop, "Don't Be Stupid," included practical advice on everything from permission slips and first-aid kits to the appropriate way to hug a teenager.

"You can sue anybody at anytime for anything," Coleman told youth ministry leaders.

Many of the topics Coleman addressed are part of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's Safe Church Initiative, a push to reduce the risk of sexual abuse or other negligence by church staff or volunteers.

Church leaders first must set standards of conduct and safety that translate into policies and procedures that will be followed by each staff member and ministry volunteer, Coleman said. Standards are crucial, even for missions or churches with only a few members.

"Most of us don't have a standard; that's the problem," he said. "We have to do everything we can to protect our kids, and we need procedures to protect ourselves."

Among its Safe Church materials, KBC provides a "Covenant of Ministerial Sexual Ethics," sample interview questions for potential staff and volunteers, and "Practical Safeguards for Counseling" that churches can

use to develop their own policies and procedures. These and other resources are available for download at the KBC Web site, www.kybaptist.org, or by contacting the convention at (866) 489-3575.

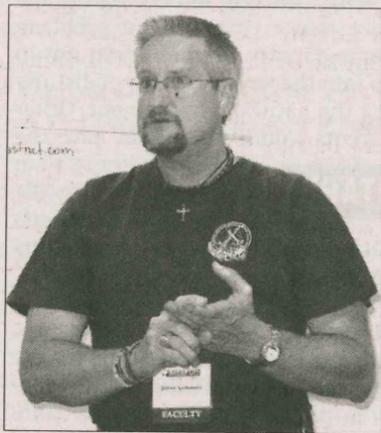
Two major components of becoming a safe church are background checks and training for church staff and volunteers, Coleman said.

KBC has partnered with Protect My Ministry to provide Kentucky Baptist churches background checks at a reduced rate. With an applicant's permission, checks are made with criminal and sexual offender databases. Additional public and private records can be accessed if needed.

When congregations receive the background check report they must limit the number of people who have access to it and any other information obtained during the application process. For example, Coleman explained, data on church staff might be limited to the pastor, deacon chairman and/or personnel committee chairman. For volunteers, the staff person who leads the specific ministry area also would need access to the information.

Adequate training for all workers reduces the risk of severe injuries, abuse or other types of negligence, Coleman said. "If you are in dire need of CPR, do you want someone who's been trained in CPR or someone who hasn't trying to resuscitate you?"

Vacation Bible school, camp, mission trips and other activities are rife with potential hazards. Training key staff and ministry leaders in first aid and CPR gives everyone peace of



Steve Coleman

mind. The American Red Cross or local health department can help churches provide such instruction. Coleman suggested opening training to students, too.

Workers also must be instructed on church policy regarding conduct and safety.

Staff and volunteers must be vigilant about obtaining written permission from parents for their children to participate in activities. Coleman said to avoid using "blanket" permission forms. For example, a parent might grant permission for his/her child to go to camp but be unaware that a ropes course is part of the week's activities.

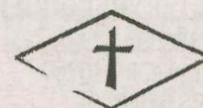
Coleman suggested that permission slips be notarized, and that the notary be from outside the church membership. A "signing party" prior to camp or a mission trip could be scheduled at the church to accomplish this more quickly and easily.

Just as important are medical information forms so workers can re-

lay information quickly to medical providers in case a child is injured or ill. Ministries can fund training, a well-equipped first-aid kit, insurance riders for uninsured students who want to participate, and other safety-conscious efforts by increasing the per-child registration fee for camp or mission trips by a dollar or two, Coleman suggested.

Keeping activities in a group or within the view of others is key to protecting children from sexual predators, and protecting a minister or volunteer from being falsely accused of abuse. Church staff and volunteers never should be alone with a child or youth, but equally dangerous is leaving a child at the church alone. When faced with this quandary, Coleman said he makes sure he is outside in a well-lit area with the child and even has sat in his vehicle with the student standing a few feet away until the student's parent arrives. Care also should be taken when embracing a child or youth. "You gotta shoot that hip," he said, demonstrating how to deflect a "full-frontal" hug by shifting beside the student and putting his arm around his or her shoulders.

Acknowledging that many congregations have a long way to go before becoming "safe churches," Coleman encouraged ministry leaders not to become overwhelmed. "If you've been driving for two hours and realize you don't have your license you don't stop driving," he said. "Training is cheap and easy but it takes time. ... Our God is bigger than any of these issues. Do not let fear keep you from doing ministry. It's too important."



**SAFE CHURCH
INITIATIVE**

Resources are available to Kentucky Baptist churches on how to create a safer ministry environment for members, guests and staff. Visit www.kybaptist.org/safechurch or call the Kentucky Baptist Convention at (866) 489-3575.

Stetzer encourages return to celebrative worship

Continued from page 1

"That's been a concern of (the KBC staff) for churches that have been on a plateau or declining, which would be the majority of churches," Wilson said, adding that based on Sunday school numbers alone, as many as 69 percent of KBC churches may fall into that category.

He said that the Comeback Church workshops are intended to help "those that are growing to take it to the next step, as well as for those that are plateaued and declining to be able to know ... some practical ideas for being able to do that turnaround."

During the conference's opening session, Alan Witham, KBC's church development team leader, described the Comeback Church workshops as an opportunity for church leaders to gain insight into helping their congregations experience "increasing levels of health and growth."

The highlight of the opening session was a video address from Stetzer, director of LifeWay Research, which followed an upbeat set of contemporary worship music from Steve Gray and the Immanuel Baptist worship team. Stetzer's message: "The importance of celebrative worship."

"When we talk about worship ... we have to recognize that it's a celebration," he emphasized, adding that the "mundane nature of repetition" as worship is in many church-

es today is not biblical.

"That's not the kind of worship we see modeled over and over again in Scripture," he said.

While researching the 324 comeback churches, Stetzer—who conducted a one-day Comeback Churches conference in Bowling Green earlier this year—pointed out that a strong majority changed the way each did worship. He noted that the congregations "reflected upon Scripture," before determining "how to apply that to their own context." Many surveyed churches described their worship as "celebrative and orderly."

However, Stetzer stressed, although nearly 70 percent of comeback churches adopted a contemporary worship style, it is not required to lead a church turnaround. He emphasized that churches need to consider several factors such as community and ethnicity when adopting a new worship style.

"It should look different in different contexts," Stetzer said. "A biblically faithful worship service should look different from Seattle to Singapore to Senegal than it does in Somerset."

A trap Stetzer warned pastors to avoid is viewing worship time as a warm up to the preaching. He also cautioned against making the worship music set into a concert. These pitfalls tend to de-emphasize and "crowd out true worship," he noted.

"When you gather together for a worship service, you want to worship," he said. "You want to make sure that the heart and the intent and the focus of your people is on God."

In order to accomplish this, Stetzer urged pastors to "simplify some things." The order of worship, he pointed out, is often crammed with announcements and other elements that take time away "that should be dedicated to God-centered worship and biblical preaching." He recommended using a different means to communicate those non-essential elements to improve focus on worship.

Stetzer acknowledged that making changes to worship is a terrifying prospect for pastors, but it is an essential aspect of leading a comeback church. But, he reminded, worship is not intended for the church.

"Worship is not just singing. Worship is ... us together saying to God who He is," Stetzer concluded. "When we say to God who He is, it reminds us that everything that's about us is not all that important."

In addition to last week's Super Saturday training event in Lexington, upcoming sessions will be held Aug. 23 at St. Matthews Baptist Church in Louisville; Sept. 6 at First Baptist Church of Somerset and Lone Oak First Baptist Church of Paducah; and Sept. 13 at First Baptist Church of Pikeville and First Baptist Church of Bowling Green.

Strong Cooperative Program totals for July narrow deficit

Louisville—While record July receipts helped narrow the deficit, Cooperative Program receipts remain 0.9 percent behind budget with one month left in the 2007-2008 fiscal year.

In order to meet the budget of \$24 million, August receipts will need to total nearly \$2.2 million, according to Lowell Ashby, Kentucky Baptist Convention's business services team leader.

Ashby said July receipts totaled \$2,284,853, the highest amount ever received in the month of July. So far this fiscal year, churches have given a total of more than \$21.8 million through CP, leaving total receipts \$192,070 (0.9 percent) behind budget.

While giving is behind for the current fiscal year, the amount received to date is \$774,060 (3.7 percent) more than the \$21,033,870 received over the same period last fiscal year, he indicated.

"The Cooperative Program is about connecting people to Christ by meeting physical and spiritual needs around the world," said Billy Compton, KBC's executive associate for Cooperative Program and resources. "Because the stakes are so high and the resource challenges for CP ministries are always present, it is truly encouraging to experience the continued generosity of our Kentucky Baptist churches."

KBC Executive Director Bill Mackey reiterated that churches intending for their Aug. 31 Cooperative Program gifts to be counted in their 2007-2008 giving totals will need to make special arrangements to ensure their gifts are received by the Sept. 2 deadline.

According to Mackey, August CP receipts need to be post-marked by the last business day in August every year and received by the first business day in September. Since Labor Day falls this year on Sept. 1, the deadline for receipts to be received by the KBC is Sept. 2.

Gifts received after Sept. 2 will be counted toward the 2008-2009 fiscal year budget totals. The fiscal year runs September through August each year.

**SUPER '08
SATURDAY**

WESTERN RECORDER

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*Earnestly contend for
the faith which was once
for all delivered to the
saints.—Jude 3*

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A generation of nature know-nothings

By **Albert Mohler**

Louisville (BP)—A recent conversation brought a troubling development into focus. A man told me that he had bought a home with some measure of reluctance, fearing that the location of the house so near to a neighborhood playground would mean too much noise.

As it turns out, he needn't have worried at all. Very few children visit the playground.

The troubling development is that many children never play outside. They prefer to play computer games, surf the Internet or update their Facebook pages. Their parents are increasingly afraid to let them play outside, frightened by the constant barrage of news stories about crimes against children. These children and teenagers are accustomed to air conditioning, sophisticated entertainments and lack of physical activity. They are aliens in the outside world.

BBC Wildlife magazine reported in July that only half of a sample of 9- to 11-year-old children in Britain could identify a daddy long-legs. A mere 62 percent rightly identified a frog. Less than half could identify an oak tree.

The findings prompted Sir David Attenborough, the famous British naturalist, to lament the alienation of children from nature.

"The wild world is becoming so remote to children that they miss out," he explained.

Alienated from nature

It turns out that many children gain whatever minimal knowledge of nature they acquire through watching television—not by first-hand observation.

Attenborough went on to argue that this alienation of children from nature could lead to ecological disaster, since these children would grow to adulthood without developing a sense of wonder and appreciation for the natural world.

Other observers warned that excessive concern for ecological impact also is part of the problem. Some parents warn children not to go into the woods for fear of disturbing the natural environment. Other parents would just rather have the

COMMENTARY

kids in the house than in the woods or the park. Electronic pacification and digital entertainments seduce both parents and children.

The BBC Wildlife magazine study also revealed that playing outside was the least valued pastime for the 9 to 11 year olds. Twice as many children preferred time with the computer.

Author Richard Louv has described this phenomenon as "nature-deficit disorder." In his book, "Last Child in the Woods," Louv told of a young boy in San Diego who explained that he preferred to play inside, rather than outdoors, because the electrical outlets are found indoors. Life temporarily apart from electrical devices was, to this boy, an unattractive (or unknown) thought.

I am thankful that I had parents who thought that children should play outdoors. I also am thankful for woods and fields and lakes and rivers in which I could play, swim and plot adventures. This summer, our family has spent a good deal of our time outdoors—mostly on or in a lake. We have been surrounded by wildlife, and we were the observed as often as the observers.

We also had the opportunity to spend some time with a wonderful Christian family that has abandoned the suburbs for a farm. The three children are learning the natural world firsthand. One morning this summer, the oldest child of the family—a 13-year-old boy—announced the birth of a brand new calf. He did not gain his knowledge of this great event through a documentary on television.

We shared a wonderful meal with this family, and a central part of the meal was a roast. The roast did not

come from a grocery store in the suburbs or a big-box retailer. The roast had just recently been grazing in their pasture. There is little risk of alienation from nature when dinner comes from the land just outside the window.

Other reports indicate that traditional summer camps are making a big comeback as more and more parents are willing to pay thousands of dollars so that their children can have some experience in the great outdoors. Some of these children are discovering that life can go on outside the reach of a cellular phone. Actually, most of these children fall in love with nature, being outdoors, and experiencing something real rather than digitized.

God's creation is to be appreciated

God reveals His glory in creation. How can we read the Psalms with insight if we never look and see that the heavens really are telling the glory of God? Something precious is lost when children—or adults—are alienated from the created world. This choice for alienation is a choice to cut ourselves off from what God has given us to enjoy and to appreciate.

Here is some good news. You don't have to spend thousands of dollars to provide your children with experiences in nature and outdoor play. Just open the door and point them into the back yard or take them to a local park. Take a walk in the woods or go fishing at the lake. Go where the light does not obscure and see the wonder of the night sky.

Who knows? Your children just might forget to look for the nearest electrical outlet.

Albert Mohler is president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville

What are you thinking?

The Western Recorder considers letters on any subject for publication, provided they don't make a personal attack. Submit by mail, Box 43969, Louisville, KY 40253; or e-mail, wesrec@earthlink.net.

It's not too late

Have you ever had something you wanted to do but then discovered you were just too late? Maybe the tickets were sold out because you waited too long. Or, maybe you missed a deadline for getting in a registration form.

Well, while it may be too late for some things that you would like to do, let me share some things of great value you can do for which you are not too late.

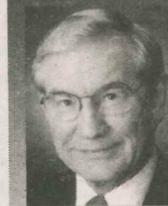
It's not too late to invite someone to church this Sunday. According to George Barna's research, 25 percent of unchurched people say they would go to church if someone invited them. If every Kentucky Baptist invited someone to church with them, the results would be incredible.

It's not too late to share your personal story of faith in Jesus Christ. Research shows that a high percentage of unreached people would listen to someone share how their life had been transformed.

It's not too late to build relationships. Our culture is so task-oriented that we often have difficulty building friendships and relationships. My wife, Kay, and I recently were traveling through Mississippi and visited with her cousin during worship at First Baptist Church of Newton, Miss. I was captured by the warm welcome of so many people at First Baptist, Newton. It's not too late for you to provide a warm greeting on Sunday at your church.

It's not too late to give to support your church's ministries. The gospel is being shared and lives are being changed locally and around the world. Most Kentucky Baptist Convention churches share a percentage of their undesignated receipts with world missions efforts through the Cooperative Program. With these gifts, thousands are reached for Christ, churches are planted and ministries are extended in Kentucky, across North Ameri-

PARTNERS IN THE MISSION



Bill Mackey

ca and around the world.

It's not too late for churches to mail in their Cooperative Program check for August so it will be counted for the 2007-2008 fiscal year. It will be too late if the check is not received by Sept. 2. Since Aug. 31 is a Sunday, in most cases, the check should be mailed by Aug. 28.

It's not too late to be an encourager. In response to a recent letter that I sent to KBC pastors, I have received several encouraging reports about increased baptisms. James Keeling, pastor of Ferguson Springs Baptist Church in Benton, said his small church of 35-50 people has been blessed with seven baptisms this year. Charlie Davis reported that Hunsinger Lane Baptist Church in Louisville has baptized 20 people the last five Sundays. And Bob Hardison at First Baptist Church of Sebree reported on plans for a prayer, contact and FAITH evangelism plan for this fall.

Is there someone who needs your encouragement today? It's not too late.

Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention

STEWARDSHIP

Debunking seven common financial planning myths

By **Don Spencer**

Financial planning is just investment advice. While investing may be an important part of financial planning, there are many other issues. These include goal setting, budgets, insurance, taxes, retirement planning, educational expenses and estate planning.

Save 10 percent of your salary per year. Who says this is enough? For some it may be; for others, it is not. Much depends on the purpose of the savings, as well as other elements. Determine what you are saving for and calculate the amount you need to set aside.

Keep an amount equal to three to five months of spendable income in an emergency checking account. Yes, you need an emergency fund—but not in a checking account. Inflation and taxes will reduce the value significantly. There are other options for increased earnings, while still keeping the money safe and accessible.

You will need 75 percent of your pre-retirement income in retirement. Maybe, maybe not. You may need less or you may need more, depending on your retirement plans.

Life insurance should equal five times your salary. Again, maybe and maybe not. Ignore this myth and have an insurance professional assess your needs. For some, goals and other unique personal issues dictate a need for significantly more insurance. For others, needs are less and they may be paying for more insurance than is really needed.

For retirement planning, put a percentage of your savings equal to 100 minus your age into stocks. Planners used this as a general guide a few years back. However, most experts would say this is too conservative. Younger people generally need a much higher percentage in stocks. With society changing what it means to be "retired," and with increased life expectancy, many in their 50s and 60s may need a higher percentage in stocks.

I am too young for a financial plan. The earlier the better. Most people who begin a financial plan later in life are having to deal with adjusting for mistakes. By starting early, you can avoid some of those mistakes and you will have more options available to you in future years. It is never too early to start a financial plan.

Don Spencer is a certified financial planner and directs the Kentucky Baptist Convention's church financial benefits department



Prison ministry is opportunity to love those who need it most

Q: My friend has a relative in prison. How can I help by being a part of fulfilling Jesus' teaching that when we visit those in prison, we visit Him?

Find someone already ministering in that situation and ask them what is needed and what is accepted in that setting. If you have such a contact in your church or circle of friends, check to see if there is a prison chaplain with whom you can talk.

FRIENDSHIP

Here are some gift ideas:

- Give paperback books that do not have staples or any metal at all. These might include: Bibles, discipleship materials, journals or devotional books. A ministry or church might be able to get these materials at a substantial discount, so check before you buy these things at full price.

- Give stationary, envelopes and stamps. This facilitates contact with the outside world which can shine a light of hope in a dark life.

- Deposit money into a prisoner's account so they can buy things from the prison commissary such as socks, soap, deodorant, etc. Prisoners often are required to buy everything they need at the commissary, at prices that are substantially higher than what they cost in the outside world.

- Give your time. As you talk with someone who visits in jails or prisons, you can talk with them about when you can accompany them.

All of the people Jesus mentioned (sick, immigrants, imprisoned, hungry, thirsty) are sometimes all gathered together in our nation's jails and prisons. Christians of another age came up with the idea of penitentiary as a way of helping people do penance for their sins, and experience reformation and spiritual transformation. In our day, prisons have often lost that aspect of purpose and simply are places to house lawbreakers and exact punishment. Jail and prison ministry is an exciting and relevant way to live out the commands of our Savior to care for those who need it most.—James Stillwell

Q: I feel like I have lost my husband. He loves being a dad and coaches our son's team. He is on several committees at church, works hard and has a good job. It seems each year he is given more responsibility and I don't seem to fit in to his life. When I try to talk to him about it, he tries to soothe me but does not see a problem. I am starting to feel alone in this marriage.

It does sound like life and opportunities have pulled your husband in several directions. Our lives are filled with multiple choices. It would be easy if the choices were clearly between something good and something bad. Most of the time our choices are between something good and something good, like serving at church, being a coach for my son's team, being a good employee and enjoying my spouse. When the choices are between good options, the guidelines become less clear.

Continue to talk with your husband about your concerns. Set aside time with him to list all the good activities you both are involved in and begin prioritizing what is essential. It is hard to say no to a good option. It is better though to say yes to what is essential. Christ was confronted with this challenge daily: crowds hungry for the Word of God, people seeking His physical healing, disciples needing His detailed guidance. How does one choose?

It is not easy but you and your husband must choose what is essential. Seek God's guidance. Be clear and decisive about choosing involvement in those activities that will support your commitment to God, your marriage and your family. Talk with one another so the whole family can monitor how your activities are impacting your relationships. This will help guide you and your husband as you make these choices.—Valerie Vincent

Family Forum writers are:

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Send questions for Family Forum to Western Recorder, Box 43969, Louisville, KY 40253 or e-mail wesrec@earthlink.net.



Clear Creek-KBC connection helps students

The Kentucky Baptist Convention emphasis on connecting people to Jesus Christ has taken on new meaning for me personally this last year as I have thought about how the connections between Kentucky Baptists and Clear Creek Baptist Bible College have impacted and empowered Kingdom work between the two.

We are connected through denominational affiliation. Clear Creek has been a recognized agency of the Kentucky Baptist Convention since 1946. It shares in the money allocated to Christian education by the KBC. The convention nominates and elects the college's 32 trustees. The school operates cooperatively within the policies, plans and programs of Kentucky Baptists and has fellowship with the churches of the Southern Baptist Convention. The ministry of Clear Creek serves the needs and interests of the denomination.

We remain focused on that connection through our four core values that drive everything we do:

Centrality of Christ. We are a community of Christians brought together by faith in Christ as Savior and Lord and by surrender to His call to service. We are committed to seek His will; to deepen His lifestyle through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit; and patiently work for His unity among us.

Trustworthiness of Scripture. We are a community of learners who affirm the total trustworthiness of God's revealed Word as the guide for our lives and the foundation for our equipping ministry.

Evangelism and missions. We are a community of individuals redeemed from sin by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit. We affirm He died for the whole world and commissions each believer to take the gospel into the world. We commit ourselves to the priority of personal evangelism and world missions.

Servant of churches. We are a community that exists to train individuals sent to us by the churches. We commit ourselves to serve the needs of the churches.

As a convention, your connections with us through prayer and financial support enable us to connect our students to Kingdom work. Cooperative

GUEST EDITORIAL



Donnie Fox

Program funds allocated to Clear Creek through our KBC churches account for nearly one-fifth of our total operating budget. These funds are a major part of why we are able to operate debt free as a college.

Your connecting with Clear Creek enables us to connect our students to a very affordable and quality theological education. Clear Creek holds dual accreditation through the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and the Association for Biblical Higher Education. Your support allows us to keep tuition at the lowest level of all SBC-accredited colleges.

Your connecting with us enables us to connect our students to practical ministry opportunities. This past year we were able to partner with local school systems where our students served as mentors to kids in after-school programs. We opened up our Family Life Center to the community for weekly basketball games with student-led devotions during each game. Two young men accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior during those devotions. Our students also served in a local homeless shelter in the community where three people accepted Christ.

Throughout this year, our students were involved in preaching 5,327 gospel messages; taught 2,134 Bible classes; made 3,995 visits; and had the opportunity to be involved in 23,519 evangelistic contacts. These opportunities resulted in our students being involved with 864 professions of faith.

Your connecting with us enables us to connect our students to full-time ministry. This past May, we had 38 graduates who received their ministry degrees. Some of those graduates now move on to seminary or to serve with the Southern Baptist North American and International Mission Boards, while the majority will go right in to the local church field.

There are a lot of connections that take place between the Kentucky Baptist Convention and Clear Creek Baptist Bible College. Thank you for connecting with us, enabling us to connect our students to Kingdom work.

Donnie Fox is president of Clear Creek Baptist Bible College in Pineville

Tribute to an old breed of hero

By Paul Chitwood

Mount Washington (BP)—“Don't make us go, Daddy!”

After a week of doing whatever they wanted—whenever they wanted—my 11-year-old son and 10-year-old daughter were less than enthusiastic about the way the second week of our summer travels was beginning.

They spent the first week swimming and fishing on the beaches of South Carolina. They would spend the second week in Richmond, Va., where I would oversee my first meeting as chairman of trustees for the Southern Baptist International Mission Board.

We barely had unpacked our suitcases in the hotel room when the battle of wills began.

“We have to go,” I said. “Daddy has to be there and I want you to be there. Tonight we meet our heroes.”

For my son, that statement must have brought to mind some of his favorite movie superheroes. When he found out we were not going anywhere near a theater, the faint trace of excitement on his face quickly faded. Further protests were met with: “We're going, no more complaining.”

They slouched in their chairs for the first half of the service—even when their father was speaking. I had to think: My oratory skills seem least appreciated by those who hear me speak most often.

FIRST PERSON

When IMB President Jerry Rankin failed to get a reaction from my two preacher's kids, I began to question my effectiveness as a spiritual leader in my own home. By the time Dr. Rankin and I were replaced on the stage by 55 retiring Southern Baptist missionaries, my children hardly seemed to notice and I began to inwardly acknowledge that I had failed as a father.

Then, one by one those emeritus missionaries began to tell their stories. Not the whole story, just tidbits and highlights—victories and sacrifices of those who had lived their lives on the mission fields of the world, some for more than 40 years.

Suddenly, the two lifeless bodies beside me resurrected. Eyes once glazed began dancing with wonder. Whispered questions began to fire back and forth.

“Where is her husband now?” one asked. “Why did they kill him?”

“What did they say happened to his wife?”

“Why didn't they bring their little boy back to America to bury him?”

“Why is he in a wheelchair?”

The questions continued on the van ride back to the hotel. Then I asked two questions of my own: “Who is glad we went to the service?”

“I am, Daddy.”

“Me, too.”

“Who wishes they had stayed at the hotel and watched cartoons?” I asked.

“Not me, Daddy.”

“Me either.”

I am grateful my children found some heroes—an old breed of hero. Plenty of flying, but always on a plane. A few stopped bullets, but bullets that did their damage. Thousands upon thousands of perilous rescues—not from blazing buildings, but from the fires of hell.

I am glad their heroes are men and women, boys and girls, who accepted the costs associated with reaching lost people. I am glad their heroes are—in the words of the old Methodist catechism—those who chose to “spend and be spent” saving souls.

Paul Chitwood is pastor of First Baptist Church of Mount Washington and chairman of the board of trustees for the Southern Baptist International Mission Board

KBC disaster relief workers needed in Muhlenburg County

Central City—The Kentucky Baptist Convention has sent a disaster relief team to assist with ongoing clean up in areas of Muhlenburg County, in response to extensive damage caused by a tornado in February. According to Coy Webb, KBC's disaster relief associate, volunteers will assist with chainsaw work, brush removal and debris clean up. Webb said it is uncertain how long the volunteers will serve and that additional workers are still needed.

Trained volunteers interested in helping may contact the KBC's Baptist Men on Mission department at (502) 489-3527, or toll free in Kentucky at (866) 489-3527.

Georgetown to welcome former President Bush to campus

School will rename fitness & recreation center in honor of 41st U.S. president

By Drew Nichter
News Director

Georgetown—Sweep off the red carpet, a former U.S. president is headed to the Georgetown College campus.

President George H.W. Bush will be the guest of honor Sept. 19, as the Kentucky Baptist institution hosts a ceremony to rename the school's fitness center for the former commander in chief. The building will be rechristened the "George H.W. Bush Center for Fitness."

The event also is intended to raise \$1.5 million for Georgetown's First Tee Scholars Program, a nationwide scholarship program that began at the school in 2001. The initiative is an offshoot of the First Tee program, which gives economically disadvantaged children the opportunity to learn the game of golf. President Bush serves as honorary chairman of the project.

In 2001, Georgetown became the first college in the nation to offer scholarships to First Tee participants, as a way to "allow young people who went through the program in high school to be able to get scholarships to go to college," according to Georgetown President William



Crouch.

The school now has at least seven First Tee scholars in its student body. Georgetown graduated its first two participants last year.

Crouch also is on First Tee's national board of trustees and has worked with Bush on a number of committees.

"We've been able to develop a close relationship over these past six years," Crouch said.

Emphasis on fitness

He explained that the former U.S. president has made a priority of encouraging physical fitness among America's children.

"One of the things I've heard (Bush) talk about over and over again is fitness (and) efforts to fight obesity," Crouch noted.

In return for lending his name to Georgetown's fitness and recreation

center, Bush asked that the school emphasize student wellness efforts and promote the First Tee Scholars Program.

Crouch pointed out that even though the First Tee Scholars Program is focused on the game of golf, "it is not a golf scholarship," adding that not all of the students play on Georgetown's golf team.

"It's a leadership program," he emphasized. "We expect (First Tee scholars) to be leaders on campus."

At the Sept. 19 ceremony, the First Tee students will be the only members of Georgetown's student body to meet President Bush, according to Crouch. Three of the students also will participate in the renaming ceremony.

Crouch acknowledged that hosting a former U.S. president on campus is a huge event for Georgetown College, adding that the ceremony

is an opportunity to pay tribute to Bush's legacy "and the work that he's done."

"To have a building on your campus named after a president of the United States is a significant thing," Crouch continued. "We think the students will feel a sense of pride about it."

And during a time when the hotly-contested presidential election is center stage, Crouch insisted that honoring a former U.S. president extends beyond politics.

"It's not about parties, Republican or Democrat; (President Bush) is an example of what a leader is, and we want to hold that up as a model for our students," Crouch said.

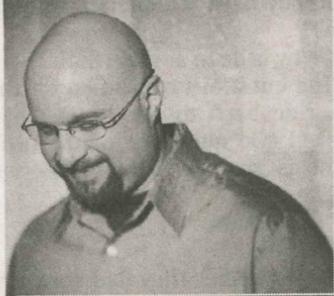
The ceremony is scheduled to begin at 11 a.m., and is open to the public. A private reception for President Bush and First Tee Scholars Program donors will be held afterward.

HEARTS ON FIRE XXII

2008 YOUTH CONFERENCE

GATLINBURG CONVENTION CENTER
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REGISTRATION DEADLINE: FRIDAY, 11-07-08



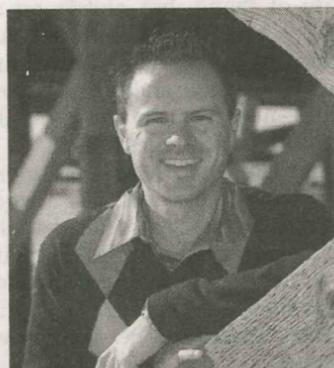
Ergun Caner

Hearts on Fire is a dynamic evangelism conference designed to reach students with the gospel and to challenge the believer to a more dynamic walk and commitment.

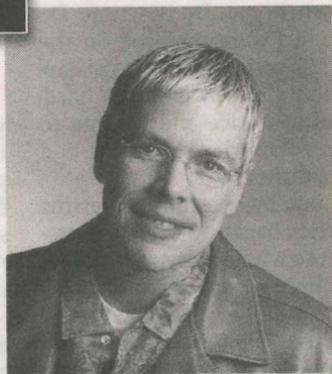
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For more info, call Judy Steele at (865) 286-6978
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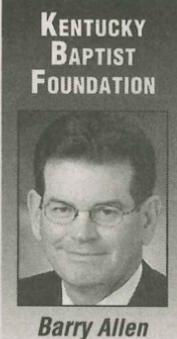
Hearts On Fire Praise Band



Ten stewardship truths

Christ's lessons on finances reflect value of stewardship

The Bible is full of teachings about financial stewardship. In fact, Jesus had more to say about our relationship to money than anything else. Here are 10 statements—with corresponding Scripture references—that formulate my basic convictions about Christian financial stewardship. May the Lord add His blessings to the stewardship seeds that are planted in your life as you prayerfully consider them as your own.



Barry Allen

- Acknowledge with all your heart what the Psalmist declared in 24:1 and the prophet Haggai declared in 2:8, namely, God is the owner of everything; we are His stewards and trustees.
- Shift your priorities to let God—not money or anything else—be first in your life, so He can work in your life (Matthew 6:24,33; Mark 10:17-22; 2 Corinthians 8:1-9).
- Demonstrate your dependence upon and dedication to God through your giving (Proverbs 3:6).
- Give generously, thoughtfully, thankfully and cheerfully (2 Corinthians 9:6-15), and let the tithe be the floor, not the ceiling, of your giving (Malachi 3:8-10).
- Learn to exchange what you

cannot keep for what you cannot lose (Matthew 6:19-21).

- Work hard at everything you do (Proverbs 22:29).
- Be honest and act with integrity in all of your dealings (Proverbs 16:8).
- Live beneath your means and save/invest for a rainy day (Proverbs 21:20).
- Recognize you do not have to be financially wealthy to make a worthy gift to our Lord (Mark 12:41-44).
- Enjoy the resources God has entrusted to you, share them to help others and invest them in

ways that touch peoples' lives in the name of Jesus (1 Timothy 6:17-19).

To the extent we in the Kentucky Baptist Foundation can be helpful to you in the matter of biblical stewardship education and encouragement, please give us that privilege. We are available for stewardship education seminars, stewardship messages and private consultation. There is no charge for our services. Please call Laurie Valentine or me toll free for information, or to arrange to use our services.

Barry Allen is president of the Kentucky Baptist Foundation, PO Box 436389, Louisville, KY 40253; toll-free (866) 489-3533; www.kybaptistfoundation.org

For Heaven's Sake

Mike Morgan



Church of the Covered Dish

Thom Tapp



Bible Crosswords

By John Thornberg

Across

- 1 Shushan, per the NIV
- 5 ___ cake
- 9 "I therefore so ___, not as uncertainly; so fight I" (1 Corinthians 9:26)
- 12 Tore
- 13 The Syrians of ___ (2 Samuel 10; hired by Ammon's heirs to fight David)
- 14 "Love ___ another" (1 John 4:7)
- 15 Brother of Jacob
- 16 Brother of Cain
- 17 Fuss
- 18 History
- 20 Moses' mouthpiece
- 22 Friendship
- 25 Alto ___ (jazz instrument)
- 26 O.T. major prophet (abbr.)
- 27 Melchizedek, king of ___
- 30 "O sole ___"
- 33 Seth's sire
- 34 Bridle part
- 35 Together
- 36 Time of revival (abbr.)
- 37 "City of David" (Luke 2)
- 39 What CBS, for one, would like to do: ___ Fox?
- 40 Elemental particles
- 41 Shake violently
- 44 Window component
- 46 Crone
- 47 Like a funk
- 49 New Testament book

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
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41	42	43			44	45					
46			47	48				49	50	51	52
53			54					55			
56			57					58			

- 53 "Love worketh no ___ to his neighbour" (Romans 13:10)
- 54 Like a certain "ranger"
- 55 "But ___ found grace in the eyes of the Lord" (Genesis 6:8)
- 56 Two-___, as tissue
- 57 Loose ___
- 58 Times long past
- 22 Slightly open
- 23 Darius the ___ (Daniel 11)
- 24 Middle Eastern country
- 25 Father of Enos (Luke 3)
- 28 Be a party to
- 29 American ___ (college course, abbr.)
- 30 Line that separates the earth's crust from its mantle (abbr.)

Down

- 1 Compass dir.
- 2 Moments of elation
- 3 "Let the ___ roar, and the fulness thereof" (Psalm 96:11)
- 4 One who votes
- 5 Peter, for one
- 6 "And they put on him a purple ___" (John 19:2)
- 7 Honest one
- 8 Son of Beor (Numbers 22:5)
- 9 Deafening din
- 10 Let go
- 11 ___ tetra (tropical fish)
- 19 Yiddish exclamations
- 21 Get rid of
- 31 Thing to be done
- 32 Units of electrical resistance
- 35 City near Jerusalem
- 37 Collection
- 38 ___ Cruces, NM
- 39 Conjunction
- 41 Single snack
- 42 "Then led they Jesus ... unto the ___ of judgment" (John 18:28)
- 43 Unightly
- 44 "Here am I, ___ me" (Isaiah 6:8)
- 45 Mimics
- 48 Many moons
- 50 Dove ditty
- 51 Bituminous pitch
- 52 Pronoun

Last week's solution

S	H	Y		D	A	S	H		S	P	O	T
L	E	E		A	C	H	E		N	O	A	H
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Campbellsville breaks ground on new education facilities

Campbellsville—Campbellsville University held a groundbreaking ceremony Aug. 12 for a new 14,000-square-foot building that will house its School of Education.

The new facility will accommodate more than 500 students, faculty and staff members. It is expected to be completed by next year.

"Teaching is the profession that creates all others," Brenda Priddy, dean of Campbellsville's School of Education, said during the festivities.

Founded in 1909, the School of Education is the oldest program at Campbellsville. Priddy pointed out that two of the earliest professors at Russell Creek Academy Normal School—as Campbellsville University was previously known—Garnett Graves and Maude Wade both served on the board of examiners in Taylor and Green counties.

"The program at that time had a reputation for excellence in teacher

preparation as graduates received top grades on Kentucky Department of Education licensing exams," she noted. "Today, that tradition has continued as the School of Education has consistently maintained a 90-percent or better pass rate on teacher licensure exams."

The new facility will feature six classrooms, an auditorium, a dean's suite, 20 offices, a student lounge, faculty work room and conference room. It also will include the Dr. Beulah Campbell Children's Literature Collection room, named for Beulah Campbell, a Campbellsville alum who attended from 1935-1936.

Campbell's educational experience ranged from teaching in a one-room school house in Taylor County, to serving as professor of education at Appalachian State University in Boone, N.C., from 1956-1981.

She is widely recognized for her knowledge of and work in children's literature and has received an honorary doctorate of public service from Campbellsville. The room bearing Campbell's name will house her collection of children's literature and materials which she donated.

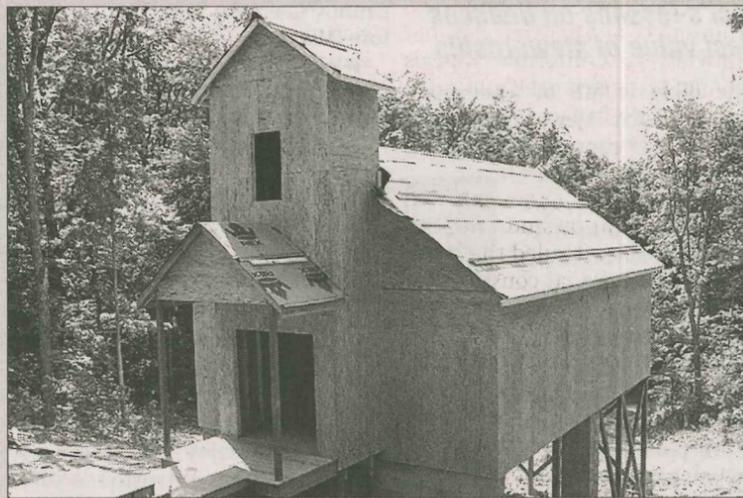
The School of Education features 19 different programs. It also includes an innovative student teacher exit program, as well as a partnership with regional administrators and teachers.

Campbellsville's School of Education also sponsors the Excellence in Teaching program; the Future Educators of America regional conference and summer camp; and minority recruitment programs.

HONORED Beulah Campbell (second from left) receives a plaque in recognition of her contributions from Campbellsville University President Michael Carter during the groundbreaking ceremony Aug. 12 for the university's new School of Education facility. The new building will house the Dr. Beulah Campbell Children's Literature Collection room. (Photo by Linda Waggener)



Under construction



Groups from around Kentucky and neighboring states have lent a hand at the construction of Heaven's Door Chapel at Lake Cumberland Resort in Burnside. The project is the work of Meridzo Center Ministries in Lynch, and came about through a ministry to 250 homes in the affluent resort area. The land on which the chapel sits was donated by the community. During the spring and summer, groups from Elizabethtown and Bowling Green helped to build the chapel's foundation and lay blocks, while a mission team from North Carolina helped frame the building. Teams also will be arriving through the fall to help complete the new chapel.

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Popular book serves as source of inspiration for Oneida's farm staff

By Lynn Cole, OBI farm manager

When I was OBI's assistant farm manager, several staff couples, including my wife and I, had a Bible study using Bruce Wilkinson's book, "The Prayer of Jabez." Jabez is only mentioned in 1 Chronicles 4:9-10, but we took the study of these verses to heart and applied them to our lives.

The prayer has four parts: Oh that You would bless me indeed; and enlarge my territory; that Your hand would be with me; and that You would keep me from evil.

I thought about this simple prayer in terms of my own life and the farm. The part about expanding my territory—and the farm program—was especially important to me. I prayed the Prayer of Jabez fervently for several years and God has greatly expanded our territory.

We could not have been so successful without His ever-present guidance. Some of the most important territories we added or expanded were:

- The morning work program and horticultural classes were added.
- The number of students who wanted to work on the farm multiplied two to three times.
- The farm crew has conducted the inspiring "Walk to Bethlehem" each year.
- Many students who have worked at the farm have given their lives to Christ.
- "Holstein Alley"—16 huts housing baby calves that the kids feed milk—was added.
- Many of our forest acres have been selectively logged under our supervision.
- Three small farms were purchased and renovated, including new fences and building repair.

- Water fountains were installed in all pastures to facilitate intensive grazing management.

- The cow herd has tripled and we have started a goat herd to give kids another livestock experience.

- Grazing the corn stalks now takes place after harvest.

- Two more grain bins holding about 9,000 bushels were built.

- Our corn acres have more than doubled, nearly quadrupling our production.

- The hog operation has been converted to total farrow/finish.

- We have supervised more than 100 volunteers annually.

- We are growing the world's first hybrid alfalfa.

- The Ag Center has received an addition.

- All of our corn and hay acres have been systematically drained.

I quit praying the Prayer of Jabez because I was overcome with the "extra territory." I see now that this was a mistake. God has sent us extra help. He will continue to lay His hand upon us, bless us indeed and keep us from evil. In fact, I am encouraging our staff to once again pray the Prayer of Jabez. We need more students who love the farm.

Finally, I encourage each of you to study the Jabez prayer, too. This has been quite a seven-year experience for me and I am sure that it also has been quite an experience for the students we attempt to lead to Christ.

W.F. Underwood is president of Oneida Baptist Institute, Box 67, Oneida, KY 40972; www.oneidaschool.org; e-mail: president@oneidaschool.org



W.F. Underwood

The Clear Creek family

Bartels leads our focus on practical Christian service

Our mission as a Bible college is to provide our students with practical ministry experience during their time here. The Clear Creek family member who leads that effort is Richard Bartels, director of Christian service.

"Practical ministry experience is a very important part of the student's training," Bartels noted. "When most of our students leave here they will go directly into a local church setting. A lot of the things they get in the classroom do not fit into that ministry perspective directly until they have had the field experience.

The field experience gives them the opportunity to take what they learn in the classroom and apply it in a ministry situation before they are called to be a pastor."

Our focus on practical ministry training consists of three areas of experience for our students.

"We expect our students to have ongoing ministry in the church," Bartels said. "All four years they are here they are expected to be actively involved in a church ministry. We call that the practical weekly ministry experience.

"We also have what we call a

Christian Service assignment," he continued. "We use this area of the program to help students gain practical ministry training with a focus in community ministry. We work with senior-adult ministries, junior high after-school enrichment programs, a homeless shelter and nursing homes. We are looking for different avenues where

we can place students in a setting that will expose them to what is going on in the community. We want students to see how much of an impact the local church can have.

"Our major area of practical training is our yearlong internship," Bartels said. "This is ministry focused where the student is placed with

an experienced minister to enable the student to focus on developing certain capacities in ministry. Each student sets up an internship that is going to meet ... specific ministry objectives."

If you are a pastor or ministry leader who would like to provide an internship opportunity for a student, contact Richard Bartels at rbartels@cbbbc.edu.

Donnie Fox is president of Clear Creek Baptist Bible College, 300 Clear Creek Road, Pineville, KY 40977; toll-free: (866) 340-3196; Web site: www.cbbbc.edu; e-mail: dfox@cbbbc.edu



Donnie Fox

California court reverses previous home school decision

Los Angeles (BP)—In a huge win for thousands of Christian families nationwide, a California appeals court Aug. 8 reversed itself and ruled that parents do in fact have a right to home school their children even if they lack teaching credentials.

The three-judge panel received nationwide attention and criticism in February when it ruled that “parents do not have a constitutional right to home school their children.” It based its ruling on a nearly 80-year-old law by the California legislature. But in the decades since the law was implemented, the panel ruled, the legislature has implicitly accepted home schooling as legal.

“We ... conclude that California statutes permit home schooling as a species of private school education,” the justices wrote in their unanimous decision.

The February ruling said parents could home school their children only if they had a “valid state teaching credential for the grade being taught”—something that many, if not most, home schooling parents do not have. The panel announced in March it would rehear the case. The original decision drew criticism from California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, who pledged legislation if it was not overturned, as well as from State Schools Superintendent

Jack O’Connell, who said he supported the rights of home schoolers.

There are an estimated 166,000 home school students in California. More than a dozen organizations filed friend-of-the-court briefs urging the court to reconsider its ruling. Technically, the court case involved alleged abuse within a family who had home schooled their children. But instead of simply ruling on that particular case, the court issued a broad ruling that covered all home school families in the state.

The latest ruling drew wide praise from home school organizations.

“This is a great victory for home school freedom,” said Michael Far-

ris, chairman of the Home School Legal Defense Association. “I have never seen such an impressive array of people and organizations coming to the defense of home schooling. The team effort was remarkable.”

The original ruling was viewed as particularly troubling to Christian families because California’s public schools have some of the more liberal laws in the nation regarding teaching about sexuality and homosexuality. Many of those families see home schooling as the only viable alternative.

The Alliance Defense Fund, a Christian legal organization, was among the groups involved in the case seeking a reversal.

“Parents have a constitutional right to make educational choices for their children,” Alliance Defense Fund attorney Gary McCaleb said in a statement. “Thousands of California families have educated their children successfully through home schooling. We’re pleased with the court’s decision, which protects the rights of families and protects an avenue of education that has proven to benefit children time and time again.”

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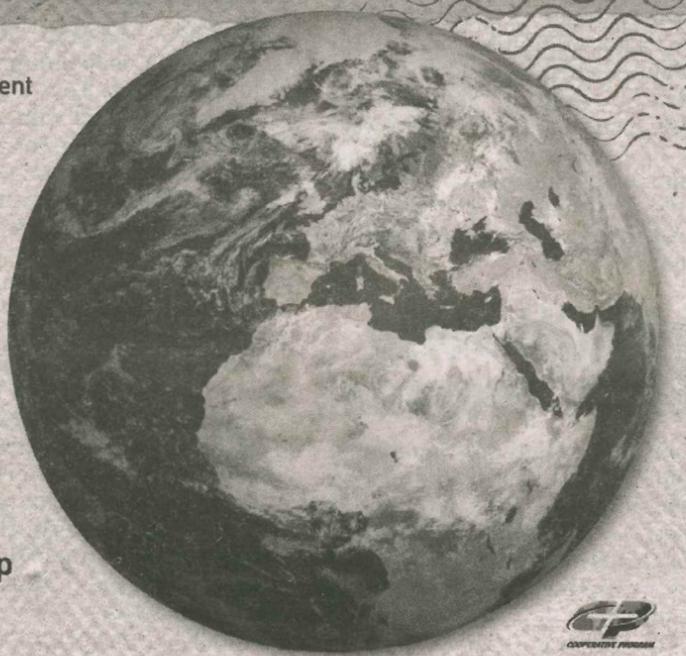


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NATIONAL NOTES

California amendment backers defeated. A California judge handed proponents of a proposed constitutional marriage amendment a defeat Aug. 8, refusing to change what supporters call “prejudicial” ballot language. The ballot title and summary—the exact language voters see on the ballot when voting—was changed recently by California Attorney General Jerry Brown for what he said were realities in light of the May court decision legalizing gay marriage. But amendment supporters charge that the language turned a neutral summary of the amendment into a negative one intended to “intentionally prejudice” voters.

UC can reject Christian school classes. A California federal judge has ruled that the University of California had a “rational basis” for rejecting science and history courses taught at Christian high schools. Calvary Chapel Christian School in Murrieta, Calif., and the Association of Christian Schools International had charged that the university had an unconstitutional admissions process because it refused to certify courses that taught creationism and other beliefs. The judge ruled Aug. 8 that concerns about a course whose primary text was called “Biology: God’s Living Creation” was deemed by UC experts to have failed at teaching critical thinking or the theory of evolution in an adequate manner.

Supreme Court asked to hear student’s case. The U.S. Supreme Court was asked Aug. 11 to consider whether a fifth-grade student’s religious expression on a classroom project can be considered “offensive” and subject to censorship by school officials. In December 2003, Joel Curry, then 11, made candy cane-style Christmas ornaments with a note that school officials considered “religious literature.” The note attached to the ornaments, titled “The Meaning of the Candy Cane,” referred to Jesus six times and God twice. Attorneys filed a lawsuit against the Saginaw School District and the school’s principal in 2004, arguing that school officials violated the boy’s right to equal protection. In 2005, a federal judge ruled in favor of the boy, but an appeals court panel later overturned that decision.

Poultry plant reinstates Labor Day. Responding to intense criticism, a Tyson Foods plant in Shelbyville, Tenn., that deemed a Muslim holy day one of its eight paid holidays has changed its stance. The poultry processing plant decided last year to drop Labor Day and instead count Eid al-Fitr—which marks the end of Ramadan—as a day on which all union members could either stay home or work for extra pay. The policy has been revised, and Labor Day is once again a paid holiday. Many local residents launched complaints at Tyson headquarters and at the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union, which drafted the original agreement.

A Time for Prayer September 10, 2008

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502-489-3528 or 866-489-3528

Visit our web site at:
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We will...

- Pray for people we know who do not yet know Jesus
- Pray for spiritual awakening in our community
- Pray for a movement of God in our church
- Pray for Kentucky Baptist ministries across the commonwealth



.....urgent need to connect all people to Jesus Christ.....

PRAYER PARTNERS

Please pray for the following requests associated with the Kentucky Baptist Convention's partnership missions efforts:

■ Pray for the volunteer missions team from Blood River Baptist Association that travelled to Brazil this week, and the medical volunteer team from Severns Valley Baptist Church in Elizabethtown that will be travelling to Brazil next month.

■ Pray for those Kentucky Baptist associations and churches that continue to partner with Maryland/Delaware Baptist churches

■ Pray for those attending the Partnership Missions Volunteer Team Leader Training event Sept. 20.

■ Pray for the planning and scheduling of volunteer mission projects for 2009.

For more information about partnership missions opportunities, contact the KBC partnership missions department at (502) 489-3529 or toll free in Kentucky at (866) 489-3529.

MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

■ **CADIZ**—New Light Church recently called **Donnie Garner** as interim pastor.

■ **CAMPBELLSVILLE**—Saloma Church will hold homecoming services Aug. 24. A potluck meal and concert featuring the Crossroads Quartet will follow the 11 a.m. worship. **John Chowning** is pastor.

■ **CRESTWOOD**—Ballardville Church recently called **Tony Wolfenbarger Jr.** as pastor.

■ **EKRON**—**Charles Blanc** recently retired as pastor of Ekron Church.

■ **ERLANGER**—Erlanger Church recently called **Tim Morrison** as minister of facilities and administration. **Derek Coleman** is pastor.

■ **GREENSBURG**—Pleasant Valley Church ordained Pastor **John Willis** to the gospel ministry Aug. 2.

■ **GREENVILLE**—Woodland Church recently called **Mark Poiles** as pastor.

■ **MOUNT VERNON**—Freedom Church recently called **Slade Moore** as interim pastor.

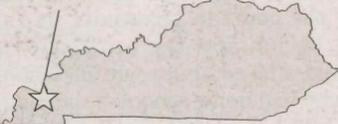
■ **PARKERS LAKE**—Walker's Chapel Church recently ordained **Jimmie Greene** and **Brian Maxwell** as deacons.

■ **PIKEVILLE**—First Church recently ordained **Brian Woofter** to the gospel ministry. **Paul Badgett** is pastor.

■ **PRINCETON**—**Jerry Holeman** recently resigned as pastor of Emmanuel Church.

Spotlight on ...

Paducah



Jim Bryant, director of missions for West Union Association, recently announced his retirement after 15 years as DOM effective Dec. 31. He previously was a pastor for 17 years and a foreign and North American missionary for 12 years.

Sugar Creek Church recently ordained **Clifton McGregor** and **Lynn Williams** as deacons.

■ **PROVIDENCE**—Pleasant Valley Church recently called **Ronnie Davis** as pastor.

■ **WILLIAMSBURG**—University of the Cumberlands' women's soccer team will host a youth fall soccer league beginning Sept. 8. The league is open to children in preschool through 5th grade. Participants will play two games a week for four weeks. The cost is \$55 per child, which includes a T-shirt. For more information, call women's head soccer coach **Aron Bassoff** at (606) 593-4404.

NAMB recognizes KBC's state Mission Service Corps program

Atlanta—As reported in last week's Western Recorder, the Kentucky Baptist Convention recently was recognized by the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board for mobilizing the greatest number of Mission Service Corps missionaries of any state convention during 2007.

NAMB President Geoff Hammond presented the award during NAMB's summer leadership gathering in Atlanta July 27-31.

Last year, the KBC assigned 24 MSC missionaries, according to Eric Allen, director of the KBC's mission service and ministries department. Allen accepted the award for the KBC, along with Teresa Parrett, KBC's missions mobilization coordinator.

"We are grateful for the positive leadership Eric has given us in recruiting and developing the MSC missionaries in Kentucky, as well as those who have gone from Kentucky to service in other state conventions," said Randy Jones, KBC's missions growth team leader.

Mission Service Corps enlists,

Quartet convention returns to Louisville

Louisville—The 51st annual National Quartet Convention will be held at the Kentucky Fair & Exposition Center in Louisville Sept. 7-13, featuring nearly 50 Southern Gospel music acts. This will be the convention's 15th year in Louisville.

Among those scheduled to perform are the Gaither Vocal Band; Ernie Haase & Signature Sound; The Hoppers; The Kingdom Heirs; Gold City; Greater Vision; The McKameys; Legacy Five; The Inspirations; The

trains and assigns self-funded missionaries in response to requests from local churches and associations. Currently, the KBC has approximately 150 MSC missionaries serving throughout the commonwealth.

One of those, Harrell Riley of Princeton, was honored in May as NAMB's MSC Missionary of the Year for 2007. Riley serves as director of Hell Is Real Ministries, a ministry focused on evangelistic outreach. He also coordinates ministries at Job Corps sites across the state and ministers at the Western Kentucky Correctional Complex in Eddyville.

Mission Service Corps missionaries are self-funded adult missionaries who serve a minimum of 20 hours per week for four months or longer in a variety of ministries. MSC ministries include church staff positions, apartment ministers, literacy volunteers, chaplains and community ministry coordinators. There are more than 2,100 MSC missionaries currently serving in North America.

Kingsmen; The Dove Brothers; and The Dixie Melody Boys.

The convention also features more than 450 exhibits spanning 175,000 square feet.

Concerts will be held each evening at Freedom Hall, with additional afternoon concerts and worship services scheduled throughout the Fair & Expo Center complex. For a complete schedule of events or to purchase tickets, call (866) 846-8499, or visit www.natqc.com.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

August

21 Understanding Other Beliefs, First Baptist Church, Pikeville.

23 Super Saturday, St. Matthews Baptist Church, Louisville.

30-9/1 Wrangler Trail Ride, Land Between the Lakes.

September

6 Super Saturday, First Baptist Church, Somerset, and Lone Oak First Baptist Church, Paducah.

11 Retired Director of Missions/ Spouse Luncheon, Severns Valley Associational Office, Elizabethtown.

12-13 Women on Mission Fall Retreat, Jonathan Creek.

13 Punt, Pass & Kick, Campbellsville University.

13 Super Saturday, First Baptist Church, Pikeville, and First Baptist Church, Bowling Green.

15 Preparing for Retirement, Buena Vista Baptist Church, Owensboro.

16 Preparing for Retirement, Baptist Building, Louisville.

17 Preparing for Retirement, First Baptist Church, Somerset.

18 Preparing for Retirement, Unity Baptist Church, Ashland.

19-21 FOCUS 2008, Jonathan Creek.

22-23 Kentucky Baptist Ministers' Golf Tournament, Cherry Blossom Golf & Country Club, Georgetown.

For more information, call (800) 266-6477 or visit www.kybaptist.org

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FOR SALE: New and used church buses/vans. Call American Bus and Accessories, Inc., at (800) 582-7118.

RETREAT: Ski Youth Retreat Package. Timberline Four Seasons Resort, W.V. Starting at \$99/night (plus tax). Includes: lodging, meals, skis, lifts, lesson. Info: www.timberlineretreat.com; (800) 392-0152. West Virginia Wild & Wonderful.

SEEKING: Director of missions for West Union Baptist Association in Paducah. West Union serves McCracken and Ballard counties. Send resumé to 2541 Olivet Church Road, Paducah, KY 42001; or wubaky@bellsouth.net. Deadline: Sept. 15.

SEEKING: Full-time senior pastor for Freedom Baptist Church. Send resumé to FBC, 3505 U.S. Hwy 27 North, Stanford, KY 40484, Attn: Pastor Search Committee.

SEEKING: Part-time youth director/minister for 20-plus involved youth with potential to grow. View job description at www.fbsonora.org. Please send resumé by Sept. 2 to First Baptist Church, Box 187, Sonora, KY 42776.

SEEKING: Full-time pastor for Frenchburg Southern Baptist Church, Frenchburg, Ky. Please send resumé, DVD, CD or tape of recent sermons to: Pastor Search Committee, Frenchburg Baptist Church, 298 Hwy. 36, Frenchburg, KY 40322-8118.

SEEKING: Part-time music/worship leader to join the ministry team at Bagdad Baptist Church. Responsibilities include leading the overall music ministry of the church. Interested applicants should send a cover letter and resumé to Kyle Wiley 5790 Elmburg Road Bagdad, KY 40003; or to bagdadbaptist@bellsouth.net. Resumés accepted through Aug. 29, 2008.

SEEKING: Full-time pastor for Columbia Baptist Church. Please send resumé, DVD, CD or tape of recent sermons to: Pastor Search Committee, 201 Greensburg St., Columbia, KY 42728.

SEEKING: Full-time pastor for Reid Village Baptist (averaging 75). Located just outside Mt. Sterling, Reid Village is a missions-minded, giving and loving church. Please send resumé to PO Box 157, Mt. Sterling, KY 40353.

SEEKING: Minister of music for a medium-sized Southern Baptist church. Comprehensive music/worship leadership, including praise teams and choirs. Blended style of worship. Send resumé to PO Box 825, Versailles, KY 40383.

SEEKING: Part-time secretary (20-25 hours a week) for Lakeside Baptist in Jeffersontown (Louisville area). Computer skills a must. Duties include bulletins, newsletters, Web site updates and other office duties. Send resumé along with references to: Personnel Committee, Lakeside Baptist Church, 11412 Taylorsville Road, Louisville, KY 40299; or e-mail to brian@lakesidebaptist.us.

SEEKING: Financial analyst at Southern Seminary. Part-time position to research, analyze, forecast and report on various financial data. Qualifications include bachelors degree in accounting or finance, excellent math and spreadsheet skills, and two or more years of related experience. Please forward resumé in confidence to humanresources@sbts.edu; or Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2825 Lexington Road, Louisville, KY 40280, Attn: Human Resources.

SEEKING: Full-time minister of worship and outreach for a growing church in western Kentucky. We are currently constructing a new worship facility and have two morning services (one traditional and one contemporary) with a combined Sunday morning attendance of 400-plus. Experience preferred; salary negotiable. Send resumé to: Edgewood Baptist Church, 676 North Drive, Hopkinsville, KY 42240; or e-mail to edbc@bellsouth.net. For more information, please call (270) 886-4461.

Bibles, literature available for free at Olympic Games

Beijing (BP)—Bibles and Christian evangelistic materials are being made available free of charge to athletes and visitors at the Olympic Games in China.

Holman Bible Outreach International has provided copies of the Gospel of John from their new Mandarin Chinese Standard Bible to several organizations to present them as gifts at the games. Chinese scholars worked cooperatively with Holman's translation team to produce a readable contemporary Chinese Mandarin Bible that also is theologically accurate.

Also, a special bilingual Bible produced by Amity Press, the publishing arm of the government-registered China Christian Council, is being made available at no charge in the Olympic Village where athletes and media are housed, according to the China Daily newspaper. The English Standard Version and Chinese Union Version texts appear side by side in the edition.

A third publication, a book co-written by American evangelist Luis Palau and Chinese scholar Zhao Qizheng, also is being distributed.

"A Friendly Dialogue Between an Atheist and a Christian" is the result of conversations between the two that began in May 2005 when Palau visited China as part of a delegation of American business, cultural and spiritual leaders, according to a press release. The joint book effort seeks to build bridges of understanding through the discussion of widely varying topics.

Ky. native uses world stage to honor Christ

By Tim Ellsworth
Baptist Press

Beijing (BP)—Elaine Breeden's swimming career almost did not get started. Her uncle signed her up for swim lessons when she was 4 years old, but Breeden was too afraid to get in the water.

"I refused to get in, and I remember him chasing me around the pool deck," Breeden recalled. "He finally won and I have been swimming ever since."

Breeden, 19, a native of Lexington, is now happy that her uncle was faster than she was. She represented the U.S. swim team in Beijing in the 100-meter and 200-meter butterfly events, her first time to compete in the Olympics.

In the 100-meter race, she advanced to the semifinals but failed to qualify for the finals. Breeden did advance to the finals in the 200-meter event, finishing seventh.

A product of Trinity Christian Academy in Lexington, which holds its middle school classes at Porter Memorial Baptist Church, Breeden now swims at Stanford University in Palo Alto, Calif. In a university setting that often can be hostile to Christians, Breeden has found a group of committed believers there as she pursues not only swimming, but her relationship with Christ.

"She's found a very comfortable, encouraging place at Stanford," according to Breeden's mother, Lenore. "She loves everything about it."

Elaine Breeden came from a Christian home and became a believer at a young age, and the faith that has been nurtured in her since childhood has a profound impact on her as a competitive swimmer.

"Being a Christian affects my athletics more than any other factor," she acknowledged. "I know that my talent does not come from myself, and that I have a responsibility to put forth effort and perform to the best of my ability. Knowing that



READY TO RACE Elaine Breeden, a Lexington native, prepares to compete in the Women's 100-meter butterfly at the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games Aug. 9. She finished sixth overall, but did not qualify for the finals. She placed seventh in the finals of the 200-meter butterfly event Aug. 14. (BP photo by David McIntyre/Genesis Photos)

the outcome of my races is in God's hands gives me a sense of peace and keeps me humble in victory as in defeat.

"Like Eric Liddell (the Scottish runner whose story was told in the movie 'Chariots of Fire'), I feel God's pleasure when I swim, and I want to use my gift to reach out to others."

Family affair

Life has revolved around swimming for the entire Breeden family for years. Elaine's mother served as an official and her father, Dan, volunteered to help with computer and technological issues at meets and for the swim club. Elaine's older sister also competed.

"It was sort of a full family deal," Lenore Breeden said. "It's a very healthy environment."

"Plus," she added in typical motherly fashion, "they were perfectly fit."

For Elaine, "I think one of the greatest blessings in my life has been

the constant love and support from my family and friends. God has provided me with countless supporters who are cheering me on from the other side of the world and their calls and letters have made all the difference in my preparation for the Olympics."

For those close to her—such as her friends at tiny Trinity Christian Academy (with an enrollment of about 350 for grades K-12)—Elaine Breeden's success is a blessing to them as well. She has given them something special to cheer for and has provided a way for them to be intimately connected to the Beijing Olympics.

"It is absolutely thrilling," TCA headmaster James Armistead noted. "Our whole mindset is preparing students to make a difference for the Kingdom. It's great to see a young person who gives Christ the glory and embodies the highest level of commitment and dedication that you can imagine."

Visitors get 'glimpse of heaven' at multinational Beijing church

By Tim Ellsworth
Baptist Press

Beijing (BP)—Ever since she was 9 years old, Barb Sturges wanted to live in China.

The Portland, Ore., native got her wish in 1986, when she moved to China for the first time. She has now been a resident for 13 years and is a member of Beijing International Christian Fellowship.

"When I first came, this was about the only church for foreigners," she recalled. "I just felt comfortable here. I love it at this church because if you have ideas, they're very supportive of you trying new things."

BICF had only about 150 people then. Now the church has about 4,000 members, three locations and several sub-congregations focused on different nationalities, such as French, Russian, Japanese, Indonesian and Filipino. It is international in every sense of the word—with about 70 nationalities represented in every Sunday worship service.

Some of the songs are sung in English, others in Chinese. The words on the screen are projected in both languages. Radios with ear-

phones are distributed to those who want to hear the Chinese translation of the sermon.

Those attending the church must show a foreign photo ID to be allowed in. That's because of government regulations that forbid most Chinese citizens from attending.

Still, John Davis, BICF's senior elder, estimated that about 60 percent of the congregation is ethnic Chinese. Some may be people who were born in other countries and who now live in China. Others are native-born Chinese who left the country to travel abroad, obtained a green card and have since returned.

Whatever their stories, the members of the independent BICF are a body of believers "united in Christ, that embraces and transforms people of all nations to impact their cities, their nations and the world for Jesus Christ," Davis said.

Upon arriving at the church, which meets in the theater of the 21st Century Hotel, everyone passes through security screening that has been beefed up even more because of the Olympics. The games are certainly a factor in the church's activities. For the opening ceremo-

nies, BICF held a special meeting for members and visitors to watch the festivities on TV.

"Have you been Olympified?" worship leader Mark Tedder asked the congregation Aug. 10. "That's the word of the day."

Last week, the church invited several Christian Olympians to visit and offer their testimonies. Former U.S. gold medalist Carl Lewis was among that group.

Davis is preaching a series of sermons on the theme "More than Gold."

"Faith is greater worth than gold, of more value than any medal won at an Olympic event," he said. "Faith is not about you and I doing things. Faith is putting our trust, our hope, in God."

Davis, who is originally from Oregon, has been at the church for the past 12 years. He said the Chinese government—which tries to regulate the Christian churches in China—has not interfered in what he preaches at BICF, or who speaks there.

"They do ask for us to give them an overview of what our activities are, and are quite happy for us to remain in this venue," he noted. "I



CROSS-CULTURAL Beijing International Christian Fellowship, a multi-cultural church with more than 4,000 members, meets at the 21st Century Hotel in Beijing. The church is mainly for foreigners; locals are not permitted to attend unless they are married to a foreigner. (BP photo by David McIntyre/Genesis Photos)

think part of that's for safety. But as far as what's preached, doctrine, finances or anything like that, there's no interference."

John Russell, missions pastor at First Baptist Church at the Mall in Lakeland, Fla., was in attendance Aug. 10, his second time to visit.

"We love the fact that it was celebrative," Russell said. "To me, it was a glimpse of heaven, having so many tongues and nations present."

Sturges echoed that sentiment. "You feel like you're in heaven," she declared, "around the throne every week."

BRIDGING THE GAP

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